

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FH
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0662
FRANKLIN/BONN

APRIL 27, 1976

SOVIETS ON HESS BIRTHDAY

ANNCR:

THE SOVIET UNION SAYS THE LAST PROMINENT NAZI WAR
CRIMINAL IN CAPTIVITY WILL DIE AND BE BURIED IN PRISON.

DON FRANKLIN HAS THIS REPORT FROM BONN:

VOICE:

RUDOLF HESS, ADOLF HITLERS ONE-TIME DEPUTY, PASSED HIS
EIGHTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY IN SPANDAU PRISON IN WEST BERLIN ON
MONDAY WITH HARDLY A CHANCE THAT HE WILL SPEND ANY PART OF
WHAT REMAINS OF HIS LIFE IN FREEDOM. ON THE OCCASION OF
HIS BIRTHDAY, THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES IN BERLIN ANNOUNCED THAT
THEY WILL REJECT ANY REQUEST FROM THE OTHER THREE POWERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR BERLIN -- THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN AND
FRANCE -- FOR A PREMATURE RELEASE OF HESS FROM HIS LIFE
SENTENCE. IN FACT, THE SOVIET UNION SAID IT WILL INSIST
THAT ONCE HESS DIES, HIS BODY BE BURIED INSIDE THE PRISON
WALLS.

RUDOLF HESS IS THE BEST-GUARDED AND MOST EXPENSIVE-TO-
MAINTAIN PRISONER IN THE WORLD. SPANDAU PRISON, ORIGINALLY
BUILT TO HOLD EIGHT-HUNDRED PRISONERS, IS GUARDED BY COMPANY-
SIZED CONTINGENTS OF THE AMERICAN, FRENCH, BRITISH AND
SOVIET FORCES IN BERLIN. THE EIGHTY-TWO YEAR OLD, SENILE,
CONVICTED WAR CRIMINAL IS THE ONLY INMATE. IN THE PAST,
THE SOVIET UNION HAS REPEATEDLY TURNED DOWN AMERICAN, BRITISH
AND FRENCH PROPOSALS FOR THE RELEASE OF THE AILING AND
MENTALLY-ILL PRISONER AND HAS IGNORED NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL

APPEALS FOR MERCY FOR HESS. TOGETHER WITH THE THREE WESTERN ALLIES, THE SOVIET UNION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LAST PROMINENT NAZI PRISONER AND ALL DECISIONS ON HIS FATE MUST BE UNANIMOUS.

SOVIET AUTHORITIES SAID ON MONDAY THAT THEY WANT HESS TO BE BURIED IN SPANDAU TO REMIND THE WORLD OF THE BRUTAL CRIMES COMMITTED BY THE HITLER REGIME. BUT POLITICAL OBSERVERS HERE BELIEVE THAT THE REAL MOTIVE FOR KEEPING HESS AND SPANDAU PRISON IS TO MAINTAIN WHAT IS NOW THE SOVIET UNION'S ONLY MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE WESTERN HALF OF THE DIVIDED CITY.

-0-

GH/RTD